

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-16 and 18-21 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 9, 11, 18 have been amended and claims 8 and 17 have been cancelled.

Information Disclosure Statement

An information disclosure statement including copies of the non-patent publications is attached. The Examiner noted in a telephone conversation with Applicant on March 23, 2004 that only a copy of the non-patent publications is requested.

Specification

The specification has been amended to provide the proper reference to the related application as requested by the Examiner.

Drawings

Figure 1 has been amended to include the legend --Prior Art--.

Allowable Claims

The Examiner noted that claims 10-21 are allowed.

The Examiner also noted that claims 8-10 and 17-19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter and all claims are thus allowable. In particular, independent claim 1 includes allowable subject matter of claim 8. Independent claim 11 includes allowable subject matter of claim 17.

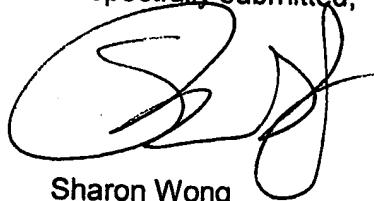
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that all of the claims pending in this patent application are in condition for allowance.

The required fee for a three month extension of time is enclosed. Should it be determined that an additional fee is due under 37 CFR §§1.16 or 1.17, or any excess fee has been received, please charge that fee or credit the amount of overcharge to deposit account #02-2666.

If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact the undersigned at (310) 252-7605. Reconsideration of this patent application and early allowance of all the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Post Office Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on March 24, 2004.

  
Margaux Rodriguez

March 24, 2004

